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CIA [redacted]

Date: 3 February 1954

Attached as of possible interest to your division is a copy of a report obtained from the Air Force.

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1. [redacted]

2. Identification of Air Facility Installations:

In Poland, as contrasted to the Soviet Union, flights involve short distances; therefore, no necessity of checking in at beacons.

3. Airfield Identification:

Charts given to pilots have civil airfields designated by name; no military airfields are indicated. There is no evidence of any other methods of identification of airfields.

4. Numbers Assigned to Aircraft:

The Regimental Commanding Officer is allotted a block of numbers for aircraft under his command. Source does not recall details, however.

5. Pilot Numbers:

Whenever necessary, a pilot reports by his own personal number. These numbers are assigned in blocks by the air headquarters in turn to corps level and again to regiments. Within regiments, an arbitrary system involving the first digit may be used, e.g., 700, 800, etc. The pilot retains this number except when he changes duty.

6. APO Numbers:

As a rule, APO numbers are not used. Pilots are not billeted on airfields. They live off the post and for mailing purposes, are addressed without rank at regular street addresses within the town. However, on rare occasions, the use of four-digit APO numbers are in order. In principle, four-digit numbers are used for all military units at or above regimental level. For example, the pilot was a member of the First Squadron, 41st Regiment (APO) 4976) of the 3rd Division (APO 1224). There is no evidence of the use of letter suffixes to denote lower echelons.

7. Technical Units:

These units have their own APO numbers and their own organizational set up. They are not responsible to the tactical division. They stay with the airfield and are equivalent to "station complement."

8. Aircraft Repair:

Aircraft are serviced by the regiments themselves. Higher echelon repairs are performed at Division or Corps level--analogous to US practice.

9. Flight Clearances:

Normal procedure is that airfield notifies destination airfield of flight plan. Wherever necessary, the pilot uses his own number for identification purposes. As regards the crossing of borders, his guess would be that the flight would be prearranged, with no checking necessary enroute. But source had no experience along this line (except when he "flew the coop.").

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10. Airfield Construction Activity:

No knowledge. Upon arrival at any given airfield, all such work had been completed prior to his arrival.

11. Aircraft Engine Repair:

a. If minor repair, plane mechanic.
b. If more complicated repair, regiment's own unit.
c. If still more complicated repair, Division's own unit.
d. If very bad repair, back to the plant.

12. Method of Identification in Maneuvers:

Pilot did not take part in any inter-service maneuvers and has no knowledge of identification methods for such purposes. Identification in daily operations, the pilot's number is used.

13. Training Program and Combat Readiness:

Official monthly progress reports are made. Combat-readiness of a pilot is gauged by performance rather than flying time. Combat-readiness of unit is measured by percentage of combat-ready pilots.

14. Physical Security of an Airfield:

The base is guarded by Air Police, a special guard company within the station complement itself. UB (counterpart of the MVD) had nothing to do with the security of the airfield.

15. Russian Pilots:

Russians are Regimental and Divisional Commanding Officers: in Poland, there are complete Soviet Regiments but completely independent of the Polish Air Force. Locations of Soviet Units remembered are: Kolbrzeg, Swidnica, Breg, and Niessa. He had no information on methods of identification employed by the Soviets.

16. Restricted Areas:

There are many restricted areas in Poland. Civil flights are absolutely forbidden over these areas. Military aircraft are warned of these areas but actually paid little or no attention to restrictions. Restrictions cover industrial areas, munitions factories and the like.

17. Aircraft Inspections:

There are two complete inspections of an aircraft. One, in the spring to prepare for summer flying, and one in the fall for winter flying. At regular intervals, e.g., 25, 50, 100 hours, the mechanic does his own checking of the aircraft. In the Polish Air Force, each pilot is required to be a skilled mechanic as part of his training. Therefore, a pilot can do his own inspection. The inspection log is maintained by the mechanic. Once a pilot accepts an aircraft from a mechanic by his signature, the pilot is then solely responsible for the aircraft.

18. Aircraft Assignment:

Aircraft assigned each pilot as his own plane but usually two or more pilots actually fly a particular aircraft, due to the shortage of aircraft.

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25X1A2g

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19. Shipment of MIGs:

On 25 December 1952, MIGs-15-BIS were given to the Poles by the USSR. They were brought into Poland crated, to the Pilot's airfield, unpacked, assembled, and then flown to the various bases.

20. Regimental Combat Strength:

A regiment with thirty-eight aircraft and thirty-eight pilots was considered up to combat strength.

21. Change in Time of War:

The presently-constituted Polish air units may be considered as cadres for next-higher units in event of war; e.g., each squadron-in-being is the nucleus for a wartime regiment.

Air Force
15-46.2,4
15-47.3
15-48.X
15-52.1

Poland
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